DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 281 466 HE 020 370

AUTHOR Hammond, Martine F.; And Others
TITLE Mandated Program Review and Program Discontinuance: Qualitative vs. Quantitative Standards. ASHE 1987 Annual Meeting Paper.
PUB DATE Feb 87
NOTE 37p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (San Diego, CA, February 14-17, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Associate Degrees; Bachelors Degrees; *Board of Education Policy; *College Programs; Decision Making; Educational Policy; *Evaluation Criteria; Government School Relationship; Higher Education; Masters Degrees; *Program Evaluation; *Program Termination; Standards; *State Boards of Education
IDENTIFIERS *ASHE Annual Meeting

ABSTRACT

Internal and external pressures that affect college program discontinuance schemes were investigated, based on minutes of the Kansas State Board of Regents and three other government-related groups/subgroups. During 1972-1986, a total of 206 programs were merged or discontinued. In 1972 a policy was enacted whereby masters programs that had awarded an average of fewer than two degrees annually in the previous 5 years were discontinued, as were educational specialists programs awarding fewer than 1.5, and doctoral programs producing less than one graduate. In 1973, 61 graduate degrees were discontinued, and within 3 years 32 additional programs were dropped. In 1982 a new model of academic program review provided for 5-year cycles of evaluation and stopped protecting certain programs. During 1982-1986, 12 associate and 32 general studies degrees were discontinued. During 1972-1986, 88% of the programmatic actions resulted from the 1972 quantitative policy, while 69% of the actions resulted from the 1982 qualitative program review policy. The quantitative policy tended to remove obsolete degrees or programs, while the qualitative discontinuance decisions tended to result in consolidation, merger, and/or retraction. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED281466

Mandated Program Review and Program Discontinuance: Qualitative vs. Quantitative Standards

Martine F. Hammond, PhD
Director of Academic Affairs
Kansas Board of Regents
Topeka, Kansas

Loren D. Tompkins, PhD
Director of Research and Policy Analysis
Jones Institute for Educational Excellence
Emporia State University
Emporia, Kansas

Barbara Breier, PhD
Assistant Professor of Education
William Jewell College
Liberty, Missouri

Paper Presented to the National Conference of the
Association for the Study of Higher Education

February 16, 1987

HE 020 370

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

ASHE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ASHE

ASSOCIATION
FOR THE
STUDY OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

The George Washington
University
One Dupont Circle, Suite 630
Washington, D.C. 20036-1183
(202) 296-2597

This paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the San Diego Hilton in San Diego, California, February 14-17, 1987. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

Compared to American business, an action oriented enterprise, educational decisions occur slowly and deliberately. Institutions of higher education typically question change rather than embrace it. While this situation may seem unusual to those outside academe, to those involved with the life of the mind, considering all possibilities and testing hypotheses before acting is the accepted and indeed expected form of behavior.

Since the 1970's, however, conditions have increasingly called for action to address what George Keller (1983) has described as a "specter haunting higher education", the specter of decline and bankruptcy. A growing number of books and articles address the issue (Cyert, 1978; Mortimer & Tierney, 1979; Behn, 1980; Mingle, 1981; Hammond and Tompkins, 1986). The literature describes two highly divergent views of colleges and universities. Contemporary organizational theorists describe higher education as a diffused, and often confused, organization, headed by a person whose role seems to be that of coordination rather than innovation and facilitation (Baldridge, 1971; Cohen & March, 1974; Millet, 1978).

The opposing view presents cases of institutions under duress whose chief officers have acted boldly and successfully implemented planned mergers (Chambers, 1981; Mingle, Berdahl, and Peterson, 1981), and institutional renewal (Green & Levine, 1985). These latter examples tend to

involve small, liberal arts institutions where actions and their associated reactions can be easily defined, and at which the threat to survival is so obvious that all constituents of the organization recognize its reality.

An entirely different set of circumstances prevails at larger public universities. Sheer size, state financing and political pressures can combine to diffuse institutional response. In an effort to expedite and facilitate response, external pressures, typically from governing boards and state agencies, are increasingly brought to bear. While these pressures are often attacked verbally from those within the institutions, they have become an accepted factor in public higher education. In fact, it has been suggested that presidents may actually welcome external pressures to give them leverage in approaching internal problems (Berdahl, 1975).

THE PROBLEM.

The majority of the states have some type of external program review process in place (Melchiori, 1982). The most typical system relies heavily upon simple quantitative measures tied directly to program discontinuance, or to a quantitative system which triggers qualitative review (Berdahl, 1975; Buchanan, 1978; Melchiori, 1982).

It is true, though, that probably neither approach exists in isolation (Dougherty, 1979). All systems have some programs which are protected on the basis of quality in spite

of low enrollments. Conversely, as is all too common, programs of poor quality that show strong enrollments tend to survive, and, as enrollments at institutions generally decline in keeping with national trends, the connotation of "strong enrollment" also changes. In practice, all program review procedures could probably be better described as those with a preponderance of either qualitative or quantitative criteria, but containing a mix of both.

The state of Kansas occupies a unique position in the literature of program discontinuance, having put together one of the earlier comprehensive program review plans (Guidelines, 1972). This plan featured discontinuance based upon quantitative measures of degree production with limited protection for new programs through sunset provisions. Berdahl (1975) points out that the policy caused 81 programs to be discontinued in its first three years of existence.

The program served the state well for over ten years, but the effectiveness of its central purpose, keeping the Regents informed of the health of their seven institutions, came into question following a financial crisis in 1982 (Hammond & Tompkins, 1986). At that time the Regents mandated that all programs in the system be subjected to in-depth reviews in five year cycles. The reviews thus initiated are based on institutional self studies, but the Regents and their staff actually supervise the process

through on-site visits.

Neither of these approaches is completely independent as aspects of both exist in most program review schemes and have been described at length in the literature (Berdahl, 1975; Buchanan, 1978; Dougherty, 1979; Melchiori, 1982). What is unusual, though, is the opportunity this situation provides to compare the two approaches in a controlled environment to examine those situations in which one or the other is clearly superior.

This project, although dealing with one state, and only seven institutions, does afford the unique opportunity to study these approaches in detail since both systems were used, and used effectively, as program discontinuance tools. From 1972-1982 a quantitative review policy was responsible for the total discontinuance of 89 programs, and the merging of 30 quantitatively weak programs with those viewed as healthier. Since 1983, a comprehensive qualitative program review policy has led to the dropping or merging of 125 degree programs.

As originally conceived, the research project was intended to provide a simple and straight forward comparison of the quantitative and qualitative systems. Specifically, the study was proposed to answer the following questions:

1. Can a different locus of decision making (external vs. internal) be associated with the two systems of

discontinuance?

2. Is there a difference between the two program discontinuance approaches relative to meaningful results?
3. Do the different policies influence differences in the reallocation of funds following the discontinuance of a program?
4. Does one approach or the other lend itself to long-range planning strategies?

As with most studies, the actual perusal of the data suggested necessary adjustments. In the first place, it was determined that the study of reallocation was impractical. While both the quantitative and the qualitative systems did allow for internal reallocation of resources in the event of discontinuance, and while records of personnel reallocation were kept, the financing scheme of the state made the data difficult to analyze. Institutional budgets indicate a total reallocation of 7.6 million dollars among academic programs in the 1983-87 period, but records for 1972-82 are obscure. The Kansas public universities, as is true of most, receive funds based upon student credit hours (SCH) generated. Therefore, unless universities could recapture SCH immediately in other curricula, or unless the program had zero enrollment, the reallocation occurred very slowly over time and would need to be monitored carefully to detect the

subtleties of changing departmental budgets.

On the other hand, the data presented other avenues of investigation, as the two approaches to discontinuance spanned the growth-retraction years. The information available thus presented a fascinating collection of material regarding the pressures which mitigate for and against each of the approaches. This gave rise to additional research questions as follows:

> In the practical arena, what types of internal and external pressures tend to support or detract from program discontinuance schemes?
>
> and
>
> Is there a differential effect based upon the type of discontinuance policy involved?

METHODOLOGY:

The latter two research questions were investigated by means of standard case study techniques. The official minutes of the Kansas State Board of Regents, and two subgroups--the Academic Committee and the Academic Affairs and Special Projects Committee for the period 1972-1986 provided ample data. The Kansas Board of Regents uses a council system to interface with the universities' administration, and the minutes of the Council of Chief Academic Officers (COCAO), the university group which deals most directly with

program review, were also studied. Further perspectives on these documents were obtained through interviews with Regents' staff.

The other questions were investigated through a more traditional quantitative research design. The 206 programs which were merged or discontinued from 1972-1986 were traced in the minutes until sufficient data were recovered to weight each action according to the criteria in Table 1.

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTORS USED TO QUANTITATIVELY WEIGHT EACH PROGRAMMATIC DECISION.

QUESTION	LEVEL
1. Locus of Decision	1. Campus based (Central administration, department or school)
	2. External (Board of Regents, Board staff, outside consultant, accrediting agency.
2. Meaningfulness of Action	1. Written codification of actual academic practice.
	2. Deletion of unused program.
	3. Restriction of academic options (e.g., removal of an entire degree level in a given program).
	4. Program merger.
	5. Dismissal of academic personnel.
3. Incorporation of Discontinuance Decision into Planning Strategies	1. No effect beyond the specific discontinuance.
	2. Action taken to meet a long-range system-wide goal.
	3. Action taken which leads to the codification of a new goal.

The coded data were then analyzed by a series of one way ANOVA's to determine if observed differences were significant.

PROGRAM REVIEW 1972-1982.

The period from the end of World War II until 1972 were

heady days for the public universities in Kansas. Statutorily mandated open admissions, enrollment driven funding, and limited involvement by the Board of Regents gave license to the institutions to expand. Social and economic forces soon slowed this considerably.

The late 1960's saw a conservative backlash in two areas within the state and nation which impacted the universities. The social unrest on the nation's campuses reached the Midwest and culminated in numerous confrontations between young people and law enforcement authorities and the burning of the University of Kansas Student Union in 1971. This led to a public and legislative outcry for state government intervention (i.e., the Board of Regents) to control the campuses. Perhaps the milieu which existed in regard to higher education in the early 1970's could best be summed up by the comment of a legislator.

> As a private citizen, as a state senator, and as a taxpayer I'm sick and tired of providing a sanctuary for violence, for turmoil, and for disruption at the University of Kansas. I'm sick of the activities of the new left. (Adams, Armitage, Butler, Shankel, and Watkins, 1983, page 199.)

The second issue was economic. The 1960's had seen a bewildering escalation in governmental taxes and services which completely outstripped growth in the economy. Nationally, deficit spending to finance the war on poverty and the Viet Nam war created an alarming set of events cul-

minating in a spectacular although unproductive wage-price freeze in 1971. In Kansas, where governmental entities are prevented from deficit spending due to a cash basis law, the bubble of economic growth burst early, when the governor in the late 1960's capped budget increases of all political subdivisions at 5 percent a year. Suddenly the state, which had ranked 4th in the nation in terms of per capita expenditure of state funds for higher education in 1965-66, found itself slipping to 26th by 1971-72 (Guidelines, 1972).

At the same time that these two situations were impacting the universities, the Regents' staff came into possession of two disturbing reports regarding future enrollments (Master Planning Commission, 1970; Kansas Higher Education Facilities Commission, 1968). These reports predicted a leveling of enrollments at the three major universities, and an actual loss of students in the three regional institutions in the period 1976-1980. Moreover, the reports also carried the warning of a shrinking pool of potential students beginning in the late 1970's. However, the fiscal policy of the institutions was based upon continued growth (Guidelines, 1972). Clearly it was time for serious consideration of the future.

EARLY PROGRAM REVIEW

The earliest attempt at organized program review began with an exhaustive study of Kansas higher education published

in 1972, and the policy remained in force for ten years (Guidelines, 1972). The plan had several common elements with most newly initiated program review schemes. First, it was entirely quantitative in nature, thus allowing for all controversial decisions to be made in advance of their implementation. Indeed, beyond the setting of numerical cut points, the plan was simplicity itself. Second, while the plan was intended to afford a comprehensive monitoring device, it soon became apparent that its application to undergraduate education was cumbersome and ineffective. While graduate education tends to be fairly straight forward inasmuch as course work can usually be related to specific degree options, undergraduate degree programs with their masses of students, service courses, majors, minors, and general education requirements are much more complex. Thus, undergraduate programs normally require more sophisticated monitoring than plans based solely upon degree production. Finally,the program was intended to serve as a catalyst to foster cooperation between the political arm--the Regents--and the institutions, but did anything but.

The program review policy when initiated in 1972 mandated a qualitative review of all undergraduate programs which resulted in no program discontinuance at that time, or for the next decade. In fact, the effect of the study was the consideration of all undergraduate programs as part of

the general education effort of the institutions and, thus, beyond the purview of the policy. On the other hand, graduate programs were judged against a constant. Masters programs which had awarded an average of fewer than two degrees annually in the previous five years were discontinued, as were educational specialists programs awarding fewer than 1.5, and doctoral programs producing less than one graduate. Masters programs granting an average of 2 to 5 degrees, educational specialists awarding 1.5-3, and doctoral programs averaging one to two graduates a year were placed on a three year provisional status. During that time the school could choose to voluntarily discontinue the program, or justify its continuance while attempting to improve production. In any event, if degrees granted did not meet the quantitative standards by the end of the three years the program was automatically discontinued unless the institution prevailed upon the Regents to protect it due to uniqueness or relationship to institutional mission.

Another often used strategy for programs which were struggling was to collapse the degree as a major or area of emphasis under another program. These changes, which did not technically involve discontinance, were normally approved by committees of chief academic officers, or by Regents' subcommittees as curricular change.

In the program's initial application in 1973, 61 degrees

were discontinued. All of these degrees were on the graduate level and involved options which were largely unused. Of these discontinued programs, 51 were educational specialists or masters programs in education, five were in the sciences, (including one PhD), two were in the humanities, two were in fine arts, and one was an engineering PhD. Of the 70 programs placed on provisional status at that time, 44 were in arts and sciences, seven in engineering, and the remainder in education. Of these 70 programs, 21 were dropped in the initial three-year cycle. From that point until the program was phased out in 1982, it was considerably less effective.

The Regents' staff continued through the decade to develop lists of programs recommended for discontinuance or provisional status (Board of Regents Minutes, 1974-84; Memo, S. Z. Koplick to Regent Dykes, May 18, 1983). During this period, 35 programs, departments, or schools were discontinued, reorganized, or merged. Closer analysis indicates that as a measure to discontinue nonproductive programs, the success was somewhat less spectacular, with eight programs actually discontinued and an additional eight moved under the umbrella of a healthy degree. The remaining 19 changes concerned internal reorganization of academic units, which resulted in no degrees being dropped from the inventory.

Several items, both historical and of a policy nature, seem to account for this decrease in effectiveness. In 1973,

the Council of Chief Academic Officers undertook a study of all undergraduate programs in the state (Minutes, COCAO, Nov. 15, 1973). The initial concept appeared to be the development of a "Guidelines for Increasing Academic Efficiency, II" report which would be an exhaustive study of the status of undergraduate education (Minutes, COCAO, March 7 and 8, 1974). However, by the time the report was completed it had much less impact (Board of Regents Minutes, March 21, 1975). In fact, the report's significance apparently was an indication that there was little redundancy in the undergraduate degree categories as indicated by an analysis of HEGIS categories, with majors in only 16 general education/humanities fields being offered by all institutions. Therefore, beginning in 1976, the program review policy which had previously applied to undergraduate education at least technically now became a graduate program review procedure (Summary of Academic Program Review Activities, 1972-1983, April, 1983).

A second issue was a caveat attached to the original concept of program review and included in the Guidelines (1972). According to this, institutions could attempt to justify continuation of programs not meeting quantitative criteria. Over the years this developed into a codified set of standards defining graduate programs which were, for all practical purposes, removed from scrutiny. These protected

programs were defined as follows (Academic Committee Minutes, Dec. 14, 1978):

1. Programs found at only one institution (uniqueness).
2. Programs for which a higher degree is offered in the same field which is deemed to be healthy (sheltered programs).
3. Programs which meet quantitative standards when combined with other programs in the same academic field (combined programs).
4. Programs for which the various institutions provide a written justification for continuance for three consecutive years. Such programs will be provided an additional five years before being subjected to reappraisal (justified programs).

These stipulations spelled the death-knell for the quantitative program review process. In effect, they resulted in a change to an almost strictly voluntary program. For example, one Masters program which had awarded only four degrees in the previous five years was justified and continued on the grounds that its discontinuance would negatively affect the morale of those working within it. Another university was able to maintain a block of six EdS degrees which failed to meet standards for six years, including one program in which only two degrees were awarded in a nine year period. Needless to say, from that time until the procedure was changed in 1982, little meaningful action occurred except in those cases in which the universities voluntarily dismantled programs (Five Year Degree Production

Reports, 1985).

A third factor which appeared to have a profound effect upon the program was simply human nature. Although Regents and University administrators had a great amount of advance warning concerning enrollment drops and the dwindling student pool, the 1970's were actually a period of extreme institutional growth. A series of governors who were sympathetic to higher education pumped money into the neglected institutions, with the result that capital improvements and program additions became the order of the day. While 66 programs were terminated, and an additional 30 combined during the decade, 93 new undergraduate and 60 graduate programs were approved. As is the case with any endeavor of this type, cutting back is difficult in times of plenty. Certainly the minutes of the Board of Regents attest to this. Following the initial thrust in 1972, the minutes show that activity associated with program review appeared as a minor annual housekeeping matter in which the Regents simply endorsed staff and subcommittee reports pro forma.

Finally, the very evolution of the Regents system in the state had profound effect on the success of the policy. The Regents historically were a political and largely ceremonial body. Appointment to the nine member Board was made directly by the Governor and was considered quite prestigious. The Board gave approval to issues such as contract letting,

promotion and tenure, but in reality carried out the recommendations of the six university presidents. The 1972 actions which actually involved little more than a house cleaning of the existing degree inventory, and the formalization of the chain of communications through the establishment of a council system, was daring in this environment. Indeed, the written justification of the 1972 program review policy, which was prepared by the Regents' staff, almost pleads for the acceptance of the idea that the purpose of the entire project is to facilitate cooperative efforts between the independent central administrations of the various universities. As timid as these overtures seem in terms of SUNY, the California system, or even the Kansas system as it is constituted today, it was very daring at the time, and formed a necessary evolutionary step.

THE NEW PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS.

If it is true that the first program review process grew out of a time of financial restraint, the new program review policy grew out of economic crisis. The 1970's were boom years for the state's three primary industries--agriculture, oil, and aircraft construction. By the end of the decade, though, billions of dollars in farm mortgages were secured by inflated land values, and the oil and aircraft industries were slowing down at an alarming rate. Since Kansas is

prohibited from deficit spending by its constitution, a blue ribbon revenue forecasting board was developed to constantly monitor the state's economic health and make sure that there was adequate cash to fund expenditures. In late spring of 1982, this group forecast a major shortfall in revenues, and as a result, the Governor directed all state agencies to trim their annual operating budgets by 4 percent within two weeks. With this short time frame, the Regents, as did most governmental agencies, dictated a 4 percent across the board reduction. The turmoil created in meeting this mandate and the accompanying vertical flow of power within the higher education bureaucracy has been studied elsewhere (Hammond and Tompkins, 1986).

In any event, the Regents were suddenly thrust from relative obscurity onto the front page of the state's newspapers daily. At the height of this uproar, the Regents took a firm stand for the future and affirmed a resolution that if further cuts were necessary, they would be made on a selective, programmatic basis rather than across the board (Board of Regents Minutes, July 2, 1982). At the next monthly meeting, the Executive Secretary of the Board delivered a report in which he stated conditions necessary to make a program discontinuance policy work (Board of Regents Minutes, July 24, 1982). These were as follows:

1. Mechanisms for review must be developed.

2. Review criteria must be established.

3. The institutions must develop procedures to allow themselves to initiate discontinuance.

4. Review and discontinuance must be tied to the development of clear mission statements.

5. Leadership must be developed in the area of making hard decisions.

With these five precepts in mind, the Board of Regents and staff began work on a new model of program review, and adopted a plan on December 17, 1982. The fact that the Regents were expecting far more from this system than the earlier one is obvious from a 1984 summary of the policy entitled, "Program Review in the Regents System", in which the following goals for the policy are listed:

1. To enhance the ability of the Board of Regents to govern institutions under its jurisdiction.

2. To increase the Board's knowledge and understanding of the programs conducted at its institutions in order to make informed decisions in an ever changing environment.

3. To provide for the periodic and system-wide review of all programs at each Regents' institution.

4. To provide for additional self-study of all programs in order to improve management at the institutional level.

This procedure was based upon the idea of every academic program in the system being evaluted in five year cycles. The various institutions were allowed considerable latitude in initiating these studies, but regardless of the method, all were required to list the strengths of each program, its

weaknesses, and to develop a plan of action to address those weaknesses and to maximize strengths. While there is considerable flexibility as to process, guidelines are somewhat rigid for the product. The policy dictates that the review document for each program must include the following:

1. Enrollment history and projections.
2. Stated objectives of the program and relation of those to the institution's mission statement.
3. Curriculum strengths and weaknesses.
4. Assessment of staff quality and teaching responsibility.
5. Characteristics of students enrolled in the program.

A key to the program was the provision for on-site visits by Regents' staff and teams of Regents themselves. Following these visits, the Board teams and staff prepared recommendations for program discontinuance, and these recommendations were then acted upon by the Board sitting as a whole, rather than Councils and subcommittees as had been the case with the earlier system.

Additionally, the Regents have done away with the policy of protecting certain programs, and have become proactive in identifying exact problem areas in various programs. For example, under the earlier policy, it was common to find graduate professional programs offered at the undergraduate level even if employment was not available, since these efforts were protected as long as the graduate program was

healthy. These programs were quickly ferreted out under the new policy. Staff also point to a tendency for institutions to voluntarily submit weak programs for discontinuance rather than take them through the review process (Hammond, 1986).

Another claim for the new policy is that it allows for program discontinuance within the confines of Regent policy, rather than being based upon that which the institutions are willing to surrender. The Regents, for example, have taken a position against the proliferation of Associate and the Bachelor of General Studies degrees. Under the current policy, 12 Associate and 32 General Studies degrees have been discontinued in the past four years. At the other end of the spectrum is the realignment of numerous doctorates in the field of education, which was based upon dismantling a number of competing programs within the context of institutional mission.

Of course, there is a distaff side to the process. Individual Regents in Kansas are unpaid political appointees. Thus, the position is of a civic rather than a professional nature, and their direct involvement in the program review process is extremely time consuming. This has led to at least two Regents who were very instrumental in the development of the policy resigning due to the press of outside business. This personal involvement also has an impact upon the institutions themselves and leads to fear and resentment

toward Regents program review, especially among those within programs which are weak. The current review process, while moving rapidly in terms of higher education, is viewed as agonizingly slow in terms of business and industry. In fact, the newly elected, business-oriented governor has publicly announced that he will not reappoint any of the current Regents, as he believes they are reluctant to make "hard decisions".

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS.

While over 200 programs were discontinued or merged during the past 15 years as a result of one or the other of these policies, it was possible to recover sufficient information to allow coding on only 181 cases. Of these, 105 were actions under the 1972 quantitative policy and represented information on 88 percent of all programmatic actions. The remaining 76 cases were actions occurring under the 1982 qualitative program review policy and constitute 69 percent of those actions. The remaining cases could not be coded for several reasons. In the earlier period this usually occurred because the minutes regarding the action were vague; in the later actions the review process itself becomes so complex that details are occluded. For example, the current program review policy frequently leads to system-wide decisions such as one to discontinue Master of Philosophy degrees in all

subject areas. The minutes regarding such actions normally do not contain numerical data and, thus, counting becomes imprecise. On a substantive level, there was no particular pattern to those situations in which coding was impossible.

The three questions investigated by the quantitative analysis were each subjected to one-way ANOVA with the criterion variable in each case being the quantitative versus the qualitative policy.

TABLE 2

Analysis of the Locus of Initial Program Discontinuance Decision (Campus or External)

Source	S S	D F	M S	F	P
Effect	2.135	1	2.135	.886	----
Error	431.62	179	2.411		

TABLE 3

Analysis of the Meaningfulness of Decision

Source	S S	D F	M S	F	P
Effect	6.641	1	6.641	7.9	.005
Error	150.498	179	.841		

TABLE 4

Analysis of the Policy Ramifications of Discontinuance Decisions

Source	S S	D F	M S	F	P
Effect	18.128	1	18.128	59.0	.001
Error	54.89	179	.307		

As indicated in Table 2, the locus of the initial decision to discontinue programs does not significantly differ from one method to another. This is probably due to a general reluctance to relinquish programs than to a policy difference. Time and again, university administrators presented justifications for programs which appeared to exist only on paper, particularly during the period of protected programs. When programs were presented voluntarily for discontinuance, it often involved a trade-off to protect another option.

This was not the case with the other two questions. As indicated in Table 3, there was a difference in the meaningfulness of the decision to discontinue between the two policies. The quantitative policy tended to act as an instrument to clean out the degree inventory by removing obsolete degrees and programs. The qualitative program review discontinuance decisions, on the other hand, tended to result in consolidation, merger, and/or retraction.

Similarly, there was a significant difference in the

degree to which discontinuance decisions became incorporated into planning strategies. The discontinuance of programs under the quantitative policy tended to occur in a random fashion with high mortality rates among non-productive programs. Discontinuance is more likely to influence policy under the qualitative program, and often relates to policy decisions of the Regents, such as institutional mission statements, and/or increased efficiency.

Purely quantitative program discontinuance procedures can be thought of as "safe" policies. The analysis of the quantitative data leads to some surprisingly clear-cut, although simple conclusions regarding the two types of policies. In contrast to Berdahl's (1975) suggestion, and beliefs of Kansas Regents' staff, it does not appear that either type of program review is superior in encouraging university administrators to voluntarily surrender programs. Arguments which have been raised previously for each of the approaches fail to fully appreciate the political realities of discontinuance decisions. However, as Rudolf (1985) notes, there is a seductive simplicity attached to defining institutional success and hard times by absolute standards. This, rather than any objective standards, may explain the popularity of policies which include "objective" quantitative triggers.

On the other hand, it is rather obvious that purely

quantitative policies cannot result in as meaningful discontinuance decisions as qualitative review. If productivity standards are set too low, all discontinuance decisions will have little meaning, and the result will be only to prune dead programs from inventories. Conversely, if production levels are set high enough to be meaningful, important but esoteric programs which exist in all institutions, will be constantly caught in the policy dragnet, which will certainly create tension and insecurity for those involved with them. When this began occurring under the quantitative mandate, it led to the evolution of the protected program policy of 1978 (Academic Committee Minutes, Dec. 14, 1978). While this policy was effective in sheltering small but healthy programs, it was abused and used to retain all manner of weak programs.

Then, too, system-wide policy decisions can hardly be interpreted in terms of numbers. Under the 1972 policy, institutions were free to develop new programs or to subdivide existing programs to compensate for those lost as long as minimal enrollments could be maintained. Growth, then, was haphazard at best, and it was impossible to discern institutional mission by considering the lists of dropped and initiated programs. In fact, it would appear that the period 1972-1982 is a period of the kind of reactive adaptation to decline that Gaff (1985) describes.

Qualitative program review by its nature operates in a differentiated manner. While it will remove deadwood from the degree inventory, as does the quantitative approach, it has the added advantage of allowing selectivity in cuts. For example, in the Kansas case, entire degree categories were discontinued at one institution and moved to another in an effort to remove duplication in the awarding of education doctorates. The policy was also used effectively to excise weak baccalaureate programs which had been protected by vigorous graduate level parent endeavors.

Additionally, program review discontinuance decisions tend to become policy driven when a qualitative approach is taken. For example, in the early and mid-1970's the Regents institutions were encouraged to expand into associate degree programs, which began to take a toll on community colleges and vocational-technical schools, and led to a rethinking of the policy. The 1982 program review procedure has been used effectively to curtail the programs at the Regents schools. A similar effort to phase out costly duplicate high-tech programs is underway and has been effective.

Another obvious advantage to the qualitative program review policy is that expansion can occur only in context. During the quantitative period, new programs were generated which failed almost immediately, but remained in place for a number of years until mercifully discontinued. The

justification for the addition of these programs tended to be generally philosophical, and little practical justification was needed. Today it is much more difficult to gain approval for new programs, particularly at the expensive doctoral level.

It would appear that a strong case could be made for the superiority of qualitative program review policies at the state level. This would be somewhat simplistic, since the political realities of public higher education twist and attenuate results. For this reason, it is necessary to point out some conclusions derived from the perusal of the 15 years' materials used in this study to arrive at a more thorough understanding of the differences in the two policies.

First, it should be noted that while much is claimed for qualitative program review, it is probably more accurate to describe the two approaches as quantitative or qualitative/ quantitative in regard to discontinuance. While the qualitative program review policy allows more flexibility than does the purely quantitative process, numbers still play an important part in the decision to discontinue specific programs. The plans of action developed to address shoring up weaknesses show a preoccupation with increasing enrollments, and programs with strong enrollments tend to find few problems during review.

The quantitative approach does have the advantage of being politically safe. In all 119 programmatic actions under the 1972 quantitative plan, there was no indication of any public or institutional reaction. On the other hand, an attempt to discontinue a block of seven graduate programs at one institution, which a qualitative review showed to be very weak, led to repercussions within state government, legal actions, and retention of several of the programs. In the case of the quantitative approach, cut lines are defined and all parties to the decision have advance warning. Qualitative review, though, involves on-going decisions typically made within an adversarial relationship.

Part of this relationship comes from the nature of power flow within an external program review environment. External reviews and decision making are accompanied by a shift of curriculum control authority from within the institution to an external political agency. While the position of lay visitor is deeply embedded in the history of higher education in this country, this presence differs inasmuch as decisions can be made based upon any criteria dictated by the political establishment. This flies in the face of the tradition of august and deliberate collegial interaction. While the Kansas public institutions have been required to draw up internal discontinance policies, these tend to operate upon the dead programs, while the thrust of the review program

comes from the external review process.

While the external program review policy causes decisions to flow from the educational to the political sector, the relationship between these two levels at the onset of the policy is significant. The safe, non-threatening, quantitative policy is perhaps all that can be implemented in a strong institution-weak governing board environment. While power relationships may be shaped by law, they will more commonly be defined by events. Funding short-falls, recissions, and direct competition between higher education and other social services for scarce dollars all call for speed of action and compromise negotiation with which universities are often ill-equipped to cope. Thus, the universities looking for allies in the political arena often must trade some of their autonomy to further political alliances. In Kansas, the trade-off was in the area of public accountability for program efficiency. When the financial crisis leading to this compromise was resolved, the power which had passed to the Regents remained there.

Finally, qualitative program review can be expensive in terms of money, effort, and morale. For program review to be effective, considerable time is required by the governing board, and extensive staff time must be devoted to the logistics of the enterprise. Morale can suffer if the faculty and administration equate political demands for

accountability with public distrust. This will particularly be the case when the discontinuance decisions lead to abridgement of tenure, and the monetary expense draws with it a human cost.

References

Adams, V. Armitage, K. Butler, D. Shankel, C. and Watkins, B. (1983). On the hill. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas.

Baldridge, J. Victor (1971). Power and conflict in the university: Research in the sociology of complex organizations. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Behn, Robert (1980). Leadership for cutback management: The use of corporate strategy. Public Administration Review, 40, (November/December) 613-620.

Berdahl, R. (1975). Criteria and strategies for program discontinuance. Paper presented at the Kellogg In-Service Training Seminar, New Orleans. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 121 176)

Botstein, Leon (1985). Leadership: Golden rules of practice. In Janice Green and Arthur Levine (eds.). Opportunity in adversity: How colleges can succeed in hard times. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Buchanan, W. W. et al. (1978). Review of academic degree programs: Striving to keep higher education viable in a time of limited resources. Paper presented to the Association of Institutional Research Forum, Houston, Texas. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 161 390)

Chambers, G. S. (1981). Negotiating mergers between institutions. In James Mingle (ed.). Challenges of retrenchment. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cohen, M. D. and March, J. G. (1974). Leadership and ambiguity: The American college president. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Cyert, Richard (1978). The management of universities of constant or decreasing size. Public Administration Review, 38 (July/August) 344-49.

Dougherty, E. A. (1979). What is the most effective way to handle program discontinuance? Case studies from 10 campuses. Paper presented at the American Association of Higher Education National Conference. Washington, D.C. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 181 785)

_____. (1985). Five year degree production reports. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Board of Regents.

Gaff, Jerry G. (1985). Faculty: Ongoing development and renewal. In Janice Green and Arthur Levine (eds.). Opportunity in adversity: How colleges can succeed in hard times. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Green, Janice and Levine, Arthur (1985). Opportunity in adversity: How colleges can succeed in hard times. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

_____. (1972). Guidelines for increasing academic efficiency at the state colleges and universities. Topeka, Kansas: State of Kansas Press.

Hammond, M. F. and Tompkins, L. D. (1986). The dilemma of the state university in the 1980's: Quality versus comprehensiveness. The College Board Review, 139, 13-19+.

_____. (1968). The Kansas higher education facilities commission's enrollment projections for colleges and universities in the state of Kansas: Fall semester 1969 through 1977-1978. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Board of Regents.

Keller, George (1983). Academic Strategy: The management revolution in American higher education. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Master Planning Commission (1970). Projection: Grade twelve enrollments in Kansas public and private schools, 1970-71 to 1986-87. Planning report number 1. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Department of Education.

Melchiori, G. S. (1982). Planning for program discontinuance: From default to design. Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 224 451)

Millett, J. D. (1977). The academic community: An essay on organization. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

Mingle, James, ed. (1981). Challenges of retrenchment. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mingle, James R. Berdahl, R. and Peterson, M. (1981). Political realities of statewide reorganization, merger and closure. In James Mingle (ed.). Challenges of retrenchment. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mortimer, Kenneth and Tierney, Michael (1979). The three r's of the eighties: Reduction, reallocation and retrenchment. Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 172 642)

_____. Official Minutes of the Academic Committee, 1976-1980. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Board of Regents.

_____. Official Minutes: Council of Chief Academic Officers, 1973-1984. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Board of Regents.

_____. Official Minutes: Kansas State Board of Regents, 1972-1986. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Board of Regents.

_____. (1984). Program review in the regents system. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Board of Regents.

Rudolph, Frederick (1985). A historical look at institutional success in hard times. In Janice Green and Arthur Levine (eds.). Opportunity in adversity. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

_____. (1983). Summary of academic program review activities, 1972-1983. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Board of Regents.